

How to Keep Pools Safe & Childproof

It's the right time to brush up on how to childproof your pool, maintain a safe swimming environment and ward off tragic accidents. Pools are meant to be enjoyed, so take these steps to keep them safe and fun. To better understand the nature of pool safety, keep a few things in mind:

- Sadly, the possibility of [pool injuries and fatalities](#) is very real. Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death for young children aged one to four. In 2018, between Memorial Day and Labor Day, at least 148 children under 15 years old fatally drowned in swimming pools or spas. For every death, twice as many children are hospitalized for injuries. 4-6 minutes underwater is enough to cause irreversible brain damage.
- Portable "toy" pools require security measures just like their permanent in-ground and above-ground counterparts. Portable pools account for 10% of drowning fatalities of children under 15.
- There's no single safety device or protective measure that will completely childproof your pool or spa, or prevent every possible accident. Incorporate several types of the safeguards listed here into your pool safety plan.
- Devices and barricades aren't a substitute for an adult with a watchful eye. Never allow a child near water unsupervised, even if they can swim.

Step 1. Set Up Pool & Spa Barriers

Physical barricades (walls, fences and covers) are the first line of defense. In some places, they are mandated by state or municipal law. At a minimum, home insurance policies typically require compliance with all local laws. Your policy most likely dictates that you're responsible for any accidents that happen to pool visitors, even uninvited ones so it's wise to block access.



What to Look for in Pool Fences

Children should not be able to get over, under or through the pool wall or fence by themselves. Exact recommendations depend on the style

of barrier and the type of pool you have. Since local regulations vary or may not exist, these pool barrier guidelines from the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) are a good place to start:

- Fences around pools should be a minimum of four feet high; 5 feet or higher is preferable.
- Spaces in the fence should not be wide enough for a small child to fit through. If a fence has vertical bars, they should be no more than four inches apart.
- Holes, cutouts or stones in a wall or fence should not be big enough to provide hand and footholds. If there are cutouts in the fence (such as decorative shapes or lattice holes) make sure the openings are less than $1 \frac{3}{4}$ inches wide.
- Chain link fences should not exceed $1 \frac{1}{4}$ inches square. If the fence mesh is too large, attach [vertical slats](#) to close off the openings.
- Don't put structures (like benches or large stones) nearby. These objects can help a child hop the fence.
- Gates to the pool area should have self-closing latches that are beyond the reach of children. No fence is secure if the gate isn't closed.

It's not always necessary to install a permanent, hardscaped fence.

[Relatively inexpensive mesh pool barriers](#)

may fit requirements when they are installed correctly. Every home is different, so hire a pool safety professional or a childproofing expert certified by the [International Association for Child Safety \(IAFCS\)](#) if you have any questions.

Choosing the Safest Pool & Spa Covers

Another way to prevent accidents is to keep the water covered. For smaller hot tubs and spas, rigid folding covers are better than soft floating covers because they block water access more completely.

Consider using [locking straps](#) to secure the cover.

For pools, both manual and automatic covers are available. Manually laid covers stretch across the top of the pool (either by hand or a crank mechanism) and anchor into the pool deck. Automatically retracting covers tend to be easier to use, but also more expensive. If you have an automatic cover, keep the controls out of reach of children.

Another option is a [pool safety net](#), which stretches over the surface of the pool and anchors down around its perimeter. When installed correctly, their strong synthetic materials catch and support kids that tumble in.



Step 2. Secure the Gates & Doors



Consider all the pathways that children could follow from inside the house to the water. Add security devices that make it harder to pass through unsupervised.

- Depending on the door style, [childproof doorknob covers](#), [lever locks](#) and [sliding door locks](#) are great additions to doors that lead outside (or anywhere else that's off limits). They're inexpensive, easy to install and unobtrusive.
- Gate alarms sound a signal when they open, so you'll know right away if an active child breaks through. [There are several options specifically designed for pool safety](#). Consider adding alarms to windows or doggy doors if any of them access the pool area.
- If there aren't any preexisting fences or gates (or the current barriers are easy to crawl over), use [baby gates](#) or freestanding [play yards](#) to help keep little ones to a defined perimeter.

If you're still concerned about kids getting into the pool after you've secured the area, you can also consider getting a pool alarm, an in-water motion detector that sounds alerts when activity is detected. There are even [wearable alarms](#) for little escape artists.

Step 3. Inspect Pool Drains & Drain Covers

Pool and spa drains can create underwater suction with enough force to trap even strong swimmers below the surface. Several tragic accidents have occurred where children pulled into the drain did not only drown or nearly drown, they also suffered physical injuries from the drain

itself.

In 2008, the [Virginia Graeme Baker \(VGB\) Act passed](#), requiring all public pools to have anti-entrapment drain covers. Home pools are not bound by this law, but drain safety should be considered a requirement nevertheless. Make sure all drain covers are clean, VGB-compliant, and not broken or missing.



Step 4. Maintain the Pool & Cleaning Chemicals



When used properly, chlorine kills waterborne bacteria and parasites in a way that's harmless to humans. But less-than-clean pools and mishandled chemicals can lead to irritation, illness and even fires or explosions.

Keep chemicals completely out of reach of children, preferably locked up. They should be stored separately from other household cleaners due to the potential for chemical reactions that can cause combustions. The storage area should be kept clean from leaves, dirt and other debris; chemical spills should be cleaned up immediately. Request material safety data sheets (MSDS) from your pool chemical dealer and keep them nearby in case you have any questions about how to use, handle or store the cleaning agents.

Step 5. Enforce Pool Safety Rules & Skills

This pool safety step is never truly finished. Parents must remain vigilant about monitoring kids in and around the pool. Kids should be taught not to run around the pool, to never enter it alone and to never play near pool drains or jets.

Be mindful about which toys and floatation devices you allow and enforce responsible play. Many experts suggest bypassing slides and

diving boards completely. Remember that life jackets and floats are only secondary safety items, and they're not enough protection on their own.

Family swimming lessons are also highly recommended, but they don't guarantee safety. To be as prepared as possible, parents and caretakers should also learn [the signs of drowning](#) (you won't usually see splashing or flailing) and consider becoming CPR/First Aid Certified.



More by:

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Design Icon: Aston Martin DB5

By Paul Bazeley



Aston Martin DB5 Saloon 1965 (Original "James Bond 007 – Goldfinger")

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Whether you are into your cars or you're a fan of James Bond or whether you know nothing about either, you have probably still heard of the Aston Martin DB5. It is not just a car but a thing of beauty and is one of, if not the most famous car in the world.

The Aston Martin DB5 was unveiled at the Earls Court Motor Show in October 1963. The DB5 is the evolution of the DB4 and the two are very similar in terms of looks. This is because John Wyer the Aston Martin general manager at the time had insisted that the styling of the DB4 had to come from an Italian coachbuilder. In stepped the Milanese company Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera and the DB4 was created.

Aston Martin once again teamed up with Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera when creating the DB5. While there are many similarities to the DB4 on the outside, it was the inside of the car which really stepped up its luxury game. The car came with electric windows, chrome wire wheels, reclining seats, wool pile carpets, twin fuel tanks, leather trim and a fire extinguisher as standard and for an extra £320 you could also have air conditioning.

While these luxury additions came with added weight, Aston Martin improved the cars specs by adding a 4.0L engine, instead of the 3.7L which was in the DB4, and a 5-speed gearbox. This helped to produce a top speed of 142mph and meant the car could go from 0-60mph in 7.1 seconds.

While these specs look pretty impressive for 1963, the problem the car faced was it couldn't compete with the Jaguar E-Type. Nevertheless, Aston Martin got the break they needed when Ken Adam, who was the producer for the James Bond film Goldfinger, asked Jaguar if they could use an E-Type in the film and the company declined. The producer approached Aston Martin after the effects expert John Stears suggested the DB5. The owner of Aston Martin, David Brown (the DB for the cars comes from the initials of the former owner), was unsure at first but he gave in and sent them the prototype. The car was then sprayed in its now famous Silver Birch and the rest, as they say, is history.

Goldfinger (released in 1964) showcased the DB5, gadgets and all, as the most famous car in the world and one of the most sought after. The sales for the DB4 had been good for the company, however, the sales of the DB5 were double that of its predecessor.

Today, the car has appeared in several other James Bond films and many other movies and has cemented itself as an icon in popular culture. When it was released the saloon would have set you back £4,175 and the convertible £4,490, if you wanted to buy a classic DB5 now it would set you back around £1m and in August 2018 Aston Martin revealed it was to build 25 replicas of the car seen in Goldfinger, revolving number plate and all, which would be available for approximately £2.75m.

Whether you are lucky enough to own one, have some money sat around ready to buy one or if it will always be a pipe dream the great thing about the DB5 is that we can all appreciate how much of a beautiful car it is. Now if you'll excuse me I'm off to watch Goldfinger, again.

Single-use plastics a Global Threat

The amount of harmful plastic litter in the oceans grows ever greater, endangering sea life and marine ecosystems across the planet.



There are a growing number of eco-friendly alternatives to single-use plastics now available.

It is estimated that as much as 12.7 million tons of plastic enter the oceans annually. Most of this plastic is single-use items such as plastic bags, six-pack rings, straws and spoons etc, and these can be hazardous to the marine animals that get caught on or try to eat them and in many cases ingesting can be fatal.

These plastic items eventually break down into ever smaller parts to form microplastics, which are then more widely mistaken for food and eaten. If that's not bad enough, microplastics entering the food chain have an impact on humans, as we then eat the fish that ingested the microplastic which in turn enters our own bodies.

The way forward is clear. We as a global species, need to urgently reduce the amount of single-use plastics. The UK introduced the single-use plastic carrier bag charge in 2015, making it law that retailers must charge 5p per bag. The proceeds of which are then used for 'good causes'. Many retailers

are phasing out plastic bags and using biodegradable alternatives, which can only be a good thing. Other single-use items such as plastic straws and cutlery as used in bars, fast food outlets and other similar establishments are being replaced by renewable materials such as birch or bamboo or even corn starch and are 100% compostable.

There are also many things we can do individually to reduce the amount of plastics entering the environment. Reuse any plastic bags you may already have, try to buy in bulk to reduce the amount of packaging you throw away. Use refillable water bottles and use tap water instead of buying bottled. Pack your own lunches using reusable containers. Make sure you recycle correctly and regularly. If we all do our bit it will have an effect in greatly reducing the amount of single-use plastic waste produced and we just might save the planet.